



**City of Bloomington  
Environmental Commission**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION MINUTES**

Thursday, July 18, 2013, 7:00 pm  
City Hall – McCloskey Room, 401 North Morton Street

**Attending:**

Carrie Albright (Chair), Sean Gorman, Dianne May, Chaim Julian, Linda Thompson (Staff), Jayne Piepenburg (intern),  
Steven Flowers (intern)

**Absent:**

Carissa Moncavage (Vice-Chair), Deborah Myerson, Kriste Lindberg, Mike Litwin, Dedaimia Whitney, Diane Jung

1. Introductions (5 min) (Time mark 7:03 pm)
2. Announcements (8 min) (Time mark 7:05 pm)
  - A. Next Environmental Commission meeting: Thursday, August 15<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm, McCloskey Room
    1. May suggests altering the meeting date by one week due to anticipated absences. Albright says she will contact the commissioners over email to discuss this possibility.
  - B. Next Planning Committee meetings: July 24<sup>th</sup>, August 15<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 pm, Planning Dept.
    1. Of the three cases for this meeting, two were continued. Thompson will be out of town for this meeting and so either Pat Shay of the Planning Dept. will lead the meeting to discuss the one case or else the meeting may be canceled.
  - C. Next Tree Commission meeting: August 21<sup>st</sup>, 9:30 am, Bryan Park
  - D. Next BCOS meeting: August 13<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 pm, McCloskey Room
  - E. Next Co. Environ. Quality & Sus. Com. meeting: August 14<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 pm, Rm. 100 Showers North
3. Approval of May minutes (5 min) (Time mark: 7:08 pm)
  - A. Because there is no quorum, approval of the June minutes is postponed until the next meeting.
4. Public comment (5 min) (Time mark 7:09 pm)
5. Guest speaker: Mark Tschida, MCPL (15 min) (Time mark: 7:10 pm)
  - A. Guest speaker, who has set up a program or place for non-profit organizations at the Monroe County Public Library, wanted to speak at the meeting tonight, but was absent. Albright will contact Tschida to see if he wanted to come in at another time or if he had a message to pass on.
6. Committee reports & discussions (35 min) (Time mark 7:12 pm)
  - A. Planning Committee & Sr. Environmental Planner (15 min: Chaim, Dianne, Mike, Linda)
    1. Three cases on the Planning Commission agenda; two cases are old, Trinitas and The Crest, and were discussed last month. There aren't any changes to these cases, and the changes aren't due until next Monday.
    2. Tiffany Clark, a mixed-use building on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street on the South side between the cleaners and the old historic dry cleaners. It is a tiny lot, less than 0.2 acres. The developer wants to tear

down the existing structure and construct a three story building with a usable roof. The first floor will have a small café with a full restaurant kitchen; back against the alley there will be a patio with outdoor seating. The second floor will have four small studio apartments, under 600 ft<sup>2</sup>, and the third floor will be a three bedroom apartment for the building owner. The roof of the building will be divided into thirds: one third will be a green roof, one third will be a covered patio for the three-bedroom apartment, and the last one-third will be covered with solar panels.

- i. The developers are asking for a waiver for building height for the sake of the solar panels, and they are asking for a waiver to have smaller setbacks due to the size of the lot. They are also asking for less parking than normal (for example, they would like two parking spots for themselves and no parking for the café or for the other residents), and they are asking for a waiver to have more impervious surface because of the smaller setbacks. They also would like a waiver for the architectural standards of the upper story windows as the style of the building is more modern.
- ii. The developers have not yet submitted a landscape plan; there will be trees in the back patio, and maybe some street trees, but otherwise the plantings will be very minimal. But, because of the green roof and likely potted plants, the overall footprint of the project is likely to be acceptable.

#### B. Natural Landscaping L4L Committee (5 min: Diane)

##### 1. Jung provided the following notes in an email to the EC prior to the meeting:

- a. The June 22 Bug Fest was fabulous. Jung talked all day about Mason Bees and every L4L sign she had with her was taken.
- b. People have been catching Jung on the street to request a sign. She's just about completely out now but has placed another order for around 25 more signs.
- c. Jung gave presentations to the Near West Side and Prospect Hill Bloomington Neighborhood Associations and is scheduled for August 1 with McDoel Gardens and a presentation has been requested but no date set yet with one of the East Side Neighborhood Associations.
- d. Jung may be working with Cynthia Bretheim of Prospect Hill to submit an application for a Bloomington Small and Simple grant. She hopes this will include a request for combined funding for Mason Bee habitats, Butterfly habitats, and Lawns for Life signs for the neighborhood.
- e. Jung is discussing a possible collaboration for a grant with the Bloomington Community Orchard for developing a large mason bee habitat at the orchard and tying in with Lawns for Life. They expressed interest and enthusiasm.
- f. Jung is beginning to have a better understanding of the synergies that make sense to collaborate for grants that can include L4L signs.
- g. Jung was out of town on June 29 and it rained last Saturday so it's been a few weeks since she has been at the Farmers Market but she was there all morning last Saturday and will continue to table whenever possible. Everyone is welcome to join her anytime.
- h. Jung was asked to provide an article for the B'f's online newsletter and a draft will be submitted via Linda Thompson for review.
- i. In the next few months, Jung will attend a Monroe County Environmental Commission meeting to discuss a possible collaboration for Lawns for Life.
- j. Please see the attached file [Ways to get rid of Weeds and Poison Ivy]. Jung requests that this be reviewed at the July 18 meeting for possible approval of materials to be available at the Farmers Market.

#### C. BEQI Committee (5 min: Carissa, Carrie, Jayne)

1. The Energy section will be simple to update, but Piepenburg is still waiting for certain parties to send needed data, but hopes that this information will come through soon so that the BEQI report can be finalized and prepared for presentation to the Mayor.

D. Tree Commission report (10 min: Dedaimia)

1. Discussion postponed until Dedaimia returns. Thompson and Piepenburg will meet with City Forester Lee Huss on Friday.

E. Climate Action Plan report (10 min: Deborah, Dedaimia, Carrie, Linda, Steven)

1. Flowers' project has slightly changed direction and he is now working on a community-wide Green House Gas (GHG) Inventory in order to evaluate whether the mayor's pledge of a 7% reduction in GHG by 2012 was met. This means that the Climate Action Plan (CAP) has been put on hold, as it will be informed by the new GHG inventory. Flowers indicated that it is common in other cities to conduct a GHG inventory every three years, and that this is a good model for Bloomington to follow.

7. Old business (37 min)

(Time mark 8:13 pm)

A. Bug Fest update (10 min: Diane)

1. The event was very successful; Thompson ate her first meal worm, and she indicated that it tasted like pine nuts.

B. Taste of Bloomington update (5 min: Carrie)

1. Albright said that she and Jacqueline Bauer had a post-event meeting to assess what went well and what didn't; she said in some ways the effort was really effective.
2. Piepenburg will consult with Albright and Moncavage about recycling for Open Streets.

C. Green Spots tour (2 min: Kristie)

1. Event was cancelled due to low participation.

D. Street tree statement for EC discussion (20 min)

1. Interns Flowers and Piepenburg prepared a report. Friday morning, Thompson and Piepenburg will meet with Lee Huss.
2. Gorman wonders about permit scrutiny. Thompson says that Huss looks at the permits, and that they need to be posted. As far as for enforcement, and who in the city to check whether trees were cut down or replanted, the answer is unclear. While there is a rule on the books, it is unclear whether there is staff to enforce this rule.
3. A permit is required three days in advance of work notice for the community; when the city removes a tree on its own, the city has to give ten days' notice.
4. Gorman wonders on what basis Parks would deny a tree permit. Thompson indicates that the city does not permit the removal of healthy trees unless they are a nuisance or danger or some other threat.
5. A proposal that uses a diameter range would be tricky as it requires a lot of "checking up." Thompson says unauthorized removal of healthy trees is not a huge issue in Bloomington, but we are discussing the issue because of Vectron. Should we or shouldn't we allow them to just go ahead; it is a difficult situation because they are going to keep moving throughout the City. It's only major companies that are funded on a much larger scale that are causing these issues, so making replacement ratios or fees very steep may be a good thing.
  - a. Albright suggests we could have a fee structure which would differentiate between residential and commercial requests.
6. Thompson says she isn't sure whether the EC should go for a tree-for-tree policy, diameter for diameter, money for tree, money for diameter, or some other option. The reason why they're taking the tree should theoretically be valid, and so it makes sense that they will not be able to replant the tree in the same location as the tree they are removing.

- a. Albright believes in setting the bar high and believes that the responsibility, and thus the money, should be put into the hands of Huss and his team, as they have a larger plan for the city and can adapt for growth.
  - b. Julian says that this will discourage Vectron's plans as well. He also advocates taking this issue to the City Council.
7. Gorman would like there to be more notice when there is going to be a removal of street trees.

E. Guest speaker update (11 min: Carrie)

1. Albright would like to establish a short list of people that the EC can invite for a 15-30 minute discussion, and what month these speakers should or would like to come. So far, Albright has contacted the following:
  - a. Lew May discussing transit
  - b. Matt Press for green infrastructure
  - c. Rachel Atz for water quality
  - d. The county Environmental Commission to get an idea of how they do thing in county meetings.
2. Albright hasn't yet contacted:
  - a. Mike Hicks, who might discuss environmental efforts undertaken by the city.
  - b. Kevin Tunesvick to discuss planting/gardening in a climate change context
  - c. Whitney's contact regarding land trusts or urban land trusts and how Bloomington can participate in this type of activity.
  - d. David Gulyas, who is the owner of a platinum rated LEED certified house in Bloomington
  - e. A representative from SIREN to discuss solar energy, perhaps lingering tax incentives, and how the technology has advanced.
  - f. Someone from IU to discuss the environmental/sustainability initiatives going on at the university. Perhaps Bill Brown or Emily Rex can be contacted to see who has a good pulse on everything that's going on at the university.
3. Albright says that when we actually invite a speaker, we should send out conversation topics a week or two before they arrive regarding what issues might apply the EC.
4. Gorman suggest that we should get the word out to the public to encourage attendance to our speaker series, such as other boards and commissions or City Council members. Thompson says that the EC can reserve the Council Chambers if we are expecting a large crowd.

8. New business (30 min)

(Time mark 8:06 pm)

A. Meeting start time for completion of 2013 (10 min)

1. Commissioners should contact Albright with ideas for new meeting times if this is desirable; otherwise the discussion is postponed.

B. Commission representative schedule (10 min)

1. Moncavage indicated to Albright that attending BCOS meetings all the time was causing conflict with her work obligations, and Albright thought that the EC could have some sort of rolling list for who will attend other commission meetings each month.
2. Julian asks whether when we send a memo to the Planning Commission if we make a presentation. Thompson says no, but that the EC can do so if they want, and has done so in the past for important cases such as those regarding larger or more rural tracts of land with significant environmental concerns. However, we haven't made this kind of presentation in a long time. Julian brings up Japanee and Kilroy's as cases where the EC has had some serious concerns and asked whether they should make presentations for cases like this.
3. Albright wonders if there used to more EC representation at other commission meetings, but Thompson says no, the EC is doing better now as far as attending other meetings. Also, as far as whether EC member attendance at other commission meetings appears on those respective commissions agendas, the answer is sometimes yes and sometimes no.

4. Julian is very interested in attending the MPO meetings.
5. Gorman thinks we can sign up to attend other commission meetings during the announcement portion of EC meetings. Albright says that this may be tried next month.

C. Downtown parking requirements (10 min: Whitney)

1. Thompson reports that Whitney was concerned about the amount of parking that is currently being proposed for new apartment buildings and other developments, such as the project on Washington Street near the jewelry store, but it's not clear what precisely Whitney wants to discuss. Thompson says that this is a rather big issue, as the idea of wanting more parking goes against what the EC has always stood for in the past. Whitney's point of view is that the parking requirements are not realistic for the city's use, and this is a big discussion.
2. Julian sees Whitney's point of view, and says that the EC should discourage people from using cars to go downtown, but people do need cars to go long distances, to go outside the city, or to go to areas that are not accessible by bus.
3. Albright says that she agrees that it can be hard to get out of town without a car, but doesn't necessarily think it makes sense from the EC perspective to argue for more parking. She wonders whether this issue can be brought up with the Board of Public Works.
4. Julian does think that this issue is in our purview and that the EC should take a position.
5. Gorman says that the EC should be forward looking, and he believes that the city should have less parking and prepare for alternative transportation, car sharing, and so on to be more important in the future.
6. Albright says that this discussion will be continued next month.

9. Commissioner announcements (10 min)

(Time mark: 8:23 pm)

- A. Thompson received a thank-you card from the Master Gardener's Association for tabling at the Master Gardener's Garden Show in April.
- B. Piepenburg says she met with someone from ITS about the feasibility of porting the Conditions of Agreement database to a web app and is feeling encouraged; she really wants to continue the project even though it has moved somewhat out of her area of expertise. She announces that she and Thompson will be testing the database at sites on Friday. Also, Piepenburg announces that her landfill gas capturing analysis paper has been sent around and she has heard that that the project has been picked up by some other individuals in the city, and that landfill gas flaring or capturing is still a possibility in the future for the Monroe County Landfill.

10. Adjournment

(Time mark 8:36 pm)

- A. Albright moves to adjourn. Julian seconds. The motion passes unanimously.